

CLEMENCY TO BRUTES;

The Substance

Of two SERMONS preached on a

SHROVE-SUNDAY,

With a particular View to dissuade from

That Species of

CRUELTY annually practised in ENGLAND,

THE THROWING AT COCKS.

L O N D O N :

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PROVERBS xii. 10.

A righteous Man regardeth the Life of his Beast.

CLEMENCY to Brute Creatures, the Duty asserted in this Proverb, is what the present Season in particular calls upon us to enforce. For, besides that the First Lesson for this Morning's Service doth evidently suggest it to us, the Custom which obtains among the lower sorts of our Countrymen of torturing one part of the Brute Creation on *Shrove-Tuesdays*, a Custom which can never be reflected on by any humane Person without Horror, very pathetically reminds us of making a due regard to that branch of Compassion the Subject of this Day's religious Exhortation. To that therefore I now address myself; and as the Instance of Barbarity mentioned is very highly reproachful to our Nation, and has in it several striking peculiarities of Absurdity and Guilt, I purpose, toward the close of my Discourse, to take this into particular Consideration in order to excite in you a just Abhorrence of it.

“ A righteous Man regardeth the Life * of his Beast.”

These are the Words of the wisest of the *Jews*; and they imply that he among them who regarded not the Welfare of the Creatures beneath him was a wicked Man. The Foundation of which Imputation is This. In several Passages of

* The Word here rendered *Life* is by Commentators understood to signify all the Necessaries and Comforts of Life.

the Books of *Moses* the Maker's great Care and Tenderness for Brute Creatures are manifested, and acts of Cruelty to them discountenanced and forbidden. Before the Flood Men had no Commission to eat the Flesh of Animals, nor were Animals of any kind permitted to prey upon one another. Herbs, and Trees yielding Seed, was the only Meat then allotted to Man, and to all the other Inhabitants of the dry Land every green Herb: For thus in the first Chapter of *Genesis* God is recorded to have decreed to the Race of Man, " Behold I have given you every Herb bearing Seed which is upon the Face of all the Earth, and " to every Beast of the Field, and to every Fowl of the Air, " and to every thing that creepeth upon the Earth wherein " there is Life, I have given every green Herb for Meat." Thus did God in some Measure restrain all earthly Animals from Acts of Cruelty, in not permitting them to prey upon one another before the Flood; and after the Flood, when he pronounced the following Licence to *Noah* and his Offspring, " Every moving thing that liveth shall be Meat " for you, even as the green Herb have I given you all " Things;" even then he added " But Flesh with the Life " thereof, which is the Blood thereof, shall ye not eat:" Intimating that in Blood, as the Part in which consists the Life of Animals, there is something sacred; thus in some measure guarding against the spilling it wantonly, and at the same time providing for such Creatures as Man should find necessary to slaughter for his Subsistence, a Death of the easiest and speediest kind. For, whatever other Reasons
may

may be assigned for God's forbidding Man to feed on Blood, it seems not unreasonable to suppose that to guard against Cruelty in the Slaughter of his inferiour Creatures, was a principal one; and so undoubtedly the *Jews* understood it, whose Descendants are to this Day very scrupulous not only as to draining the Animals designed for the Table of as much Blood as possible, but likewise in regard to the keenness of the Instrument with which the fatal Incision is to be made; as if without this they did not act up to the spirit of that Precept; no one among them being authorised to Kill who hath not undergone a formal Examination as to his Ability of duly preparing and dextrously handling the Knife to be employed for that purpose: By which means the poor Creatures that yield up Life for their Subsistence are never hacked and mangled, and put to such unnecessary Torture, as, to the great shame of Christians, they very often are amongst Us.

Thus we find the tender Mercy of God to Brute Creatures, in defending them from Barbarity in general, exerted immediately after both the Creation and the Flood; and in the subsequent Declaration of his Will by *Moses*, besides a renewal of the Command not to eat Blood, and that under penalty of Death, we meet with several particular Laws to the same purpose. In the thirty-fourth Chapter of *Exodus* the *Jews* are commanded "Not to seethe a Kid in his Mother's Milk;" and in the twenty-second Chapter of *Leviticus*, "Not to kill a Cow, or an Ewe, and her Young on the same Day." In the twenty-second Chapter of *Deutra-*

Deutronomy God careth in these Words for the Fowls of the Air, " If a Bird's Nest chance to be before thee in the
 " Way, on any Tree, or on the Ground, whether they be
 " young Ones or Eggs, and the Dam sitting upon the
 " Young; thou shalt not take the Dam with the Young:
 " But thou shalt in any wise let the Dam go, and take the
 " Young to thee, that it may be well with thee, and that
 " thou mayest prolong thy Days." And in the twenty-fifth Chapter of the same Book is this remarkable Injunction,
 " Thou shalt not muzzle the Mouth of the Ox when he
 " treadeth out the Corn." From the Observance of which particular Commandments, and several others of the like Nature, the Lord most apparently designed to guard his People from All Acts of Cruelty to Brute Creatures in general, and to induce Habits of Clemency and Beneficence in their favor. Well therefore might the wise Man impute Wickedness to Him among the *Jews* who regarded not the Welfare of the Creatures beneath him; seeing he acted in direct Opposition to the Tenor of that Law, the Observance of which was what among that People denominated a Man Righteous.

Nor let any one imagine that the Clemency in these Passages insinuated by *Moses* to his Countrymen is not a Duty likewise from Us. Clemency to Brutes is a Natural Duty, and Natural Duties are of eternal and universal Obligation. Had the good Being never revealed his Will upon this Particular, yet plain Reason might have evinced, that wantonly to destroy any of the Creatures below us, or put them to

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unnecessary Torment must be displeasing to him. Cruelty towards Men is most confessedly an Offence against God, and can the same Disposition towards Brutes be otherwise? Did not the same Hand which made Them make Us? Are they not formed with equal Thought and Accuracy? Are they not, considering the difference of their Natures, as bountifully provided for? Have they not impressed on them as vehement a Desire of continuing their Kinds? Appear they not, even the vilest of them, alike desirous of Life? Do they not, when bruised or wounded, or otherwise evil-treated, seem equally sensible of Pain?—Yes, considered in all these respects, the very meanest Worm is our Sister; and from these Considerations principally it is that mutual Compassion among Men becomes a Natural Duty. All Things that Move and Live appear precious in the sight of God, and therefore certainly ought not to be treated as vile or indifferent by us. This tender Mercy of the Creator over the lower part of his living Creatures is very strongly pointed out in that *just* and beautiful View of Nature, the hundred and fourth *Psalms*. “God, says the Author of it, “sendeth the Springs into the Vallies, which
 “run among the Hills.” And why?—“To give Drink
 “to every Beast of the Field, and that the wild Asses may
 “quench their Thirst; that the Fowls of Heaven may
 “have an Habitation in the Trees nourished by their
 “moisture, and delight themselves with singing among the
 “Branches.” This alone he mentioneth as the final Cause of Springs, and when, in the following Lines, he introduceth
 God

God watering the Hills from his Chambers, and satiating the Earth with Rain; that is done, he tells us, “ to cause
 “ Grass to grow for the Cattle, as well as Corn, Wine,
 “ and Oil, for the service of Man:” It is to supply Sap to the Trees of the Forest, which, he adds, “ the Lord himself
 “ hath planted.” And the Reason assigned for his planting them, is, not to please the Eye of Man with their stately Growth and Verdure; not to supply to him a grateful shelter from Storms, or Sun-beams; not to enable him to raise proud Palaces for himself;—but that there the wilder kinds of Birds may make their Nests. After this we see the Hills lifted high to be a Refuge for the wild Goats; and the stony Rocks cleft to provide a Fortrefs for the Conies. The Psalmist having thus shewn the Supreme Being alike good and liberal to the different Inhabitants of the dry Land in the Distribution of Space, proceeds to represent him no less so in the Division of Time. If Man hath the Day assigned him wherein to labour unmolested, to the Beasts of prey is allotted the Dominion of the Night, “ Thou,” says he, addressing himself to the Universal Governor, “ Thou makest
 “ Darkness, and it is Night, wherein all the Beasts of the
 “ Forest do move; the Lions roaring after their prey do,
 “ seek their Meat from God. The Sun ariseth, and they
 “ get them away together, and lay them down in their
 “ Dens. Man goeth forth unto his Work, and to his
 “ Labor until the Evening.” From the dry Land he turneth to that other part of our Globe, the great and wide Sea; the use of which to Man he but slightly touches on,
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but gives a most noble Idea of it as the Receptacle of numberless Tribes of other Creatures, which there live, and enjoy the overflowings of Divine Goodness. " There are " Things creeping innumerable, both small and great " Beasts ; there go the Ships ; and there is that Leviathan " which thou hast made to take his pastime therein." After this general Survey of the Inhabitants of the Land and Waters, he cries out in extatic Adoration, to their common Benefactor, " These wait all upon Thee that thou mayest " give them Meat in due Season. When thou givest it " them they gather it, and when thou openest thy Hand " they are filled with Good. When thou hidest thy Face " they are troubled ; when thou takest away their Breath " they die, and are turned again to their Dust. When Thou " lettest thy Breath go forth they shall be made, and thou " shalt renew the Face of the Earth. The glorious Majesty of the Lord shall endure for ever ; the Lord shall " rejoice in his Works." In all which Quotations it may be observed that Man is represented so much upon a Level with the other Creatures in the Eye of his Maker, that this Psalm seems to have been intended not only for an act of Devotion to the Supreme Benefactor, but likewise for an indirect Exhortation to Man to behave tenderly and beneficently to all inferiour Animals, as engaging equally the Concern, and being as much the Joy and Glory of their common Parent as himself. A Consideration certainly very Weighty, and, when duly attended to, effectually impulsive to this Duty.

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But as the Intimations of Reason concerning matters of Duty are too apt to be disregarded by the generality of Mankind, we find many sorts of the inferiour Creatures enabled to speak forcibly for themselves to the Hearts of their Persecutors. For what are the doleful Moanings, and even Tears, of some Animals when they perceive their Lives to be in Danger, but so many Calls upon their Tormentors for Pity? What else the vehement Shrieks and melancholy Howlings of others? They too among divers of their Kinds have Sighs and Groans with which to move Compassion: And to some of them Nature hath given the Cry at which the human Heart is most apt to relent—even the Cry as of a tender Babe. Nay, the dying Pangs of all of them are not without something Shocking to a well-formed Bosom: Mute though they may be, yet the many painful Distortions and Convulsions of their tortured Bodies occasion uneasiness in a humane Spectator. Even a trampled Worm, writhing and twisting itself in the agony of Death, cannot be beheld by such a one without his suffering in some degree with it. To which Observations may be added, that the very sight of Blood to young Persons is for the most part terrible; that a Man must be accustomed to the slaughter of the tamer sorts of Animals for some time before he can kill them without Reluctance; and that the butchered Carcasses of the largest kinds of these, cannot, by People unused to such Spectacles, be beheld without Horror.

Thus doth God address himself to his Human Creatures in Favour of the inferiour Kinds, by causing these, when
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pained or murdered, to excite in them a variety of Sensations to which he hath implanted an Aversion in their Nature. Which if we well reflect upon, together with the Consideration before mentioned, we shall not so much wonder when we read that there were many wise and religious Men among the Ancients who held it a Duty to abstain entirely from eating the Flesh of all manner of living Creatures, and not to put any among the harmless Kinds of them to Death upon any Account whatsoever; we shall not so much wonder when we are told that there are at this Day Countries wherein public Hospitals are erected for the relief and subsistence of maimed and aged Brutes; nor that there are People in the World so very Compassionate as to part with a Sum of Money to a merciless *European* to restore to its Liberty a poor Bird: For such People in the East there really are, and others who make it a matter of Religion not to take away Life knowingly from any Creature whatever, nay who make it a matter of Religion not to walk abroad before Day, lest by chance they should tread upon some wandering Insect, or maim it in the movement of their Feet.

We have now seen that Clemency to Brute Creatures in general, so carefully insinuated as we have shewn to the *Jews* throughout the Writings of *Moses*, is likewise so powerfully intimated to mankind by Nature that it was carried even to a superstitious excess by many of the Wise and Good among the Ancients, and is so practised in some Pagan Countries to this very Day. And can it be supposed that

Christianity sets us in any degree loose to this Duty? Nay, are not our Obligations to this Branch of Humanity considerably strengthened by that Religion? The Character of the blessed Jesus was not to break even the bruised Reed. Meekness and Compassion shone forth consummate in his Life; and in his Doctrine we find him recommending these Virtues in their greatest Latitude, and pouring forth Blessings upon them, "Blessed are the Merciful for they shall obtain Mercy. Blessed are the Meek * for they shall inherit the Earth." It would be endless to cite all the Passages in which our Saviour recommends and encourages these Virtues in general; but the following Passage implies strongly an Injunction to the Observance of that Branch of them now before us, and deserves to be for ever founded in the Ears of his inclement Disciples, "Be ye Merciful as your Father which is in Heaven is Merciful." That most glorious and yet most gracious Being, who not only, as he says in the Context to this, causeth his Sun to shine, and his Rain to fall, on the Wicked as well as the Good; on his Enemies as well as his Friends; but who likewise, we are told in other of his Discourses, giveth Food to the Ravens, and remembreth every Sparrow that falleth to the Ground. Ye, therefore, who would be worthy Disciples of the blessed Jesus cultivate in your Bosoms that extensive Clemency and Compassion for which your great Master was so eminently Conspicuous; and, in Obedience to his Injunc-

* *regis*; the Gentle, the Clement, the Indulgent.

tion, shew yourselves plenteous in Mercy even to Brutes; for to them your Father which is in Heaven is Merciful.

From what hath been now offered it abundantly appears that Clemency to the inferiour Animals is a Duty from us as we are Men, and particularly as we are Christians; and consequently that our Happiness in the future World depends in some Measure on our practice of it. Nor are there wanting several important Considerations to evince a due regard of it very interesting to us likewise in our present State.

Methinks was there no other Motive to this Duty than the Pleasure which may immediately arise from the Discharge of it, that alone should be a sufficient Incitement to it. Pity is a very tender Affection of the Soul of Man, whose Emotions when ever he gratifies, a most exquisite Pleasure results from it; and we have already shewn how very capable Brutes are of exciting this Affection. In relieving therefore the Miseries of these, we give Ease, we give Pleasure to ourselves, provided we are such Men as we should be. If our Affections indeed are brutal, it is no wonder if the Miseries of Brutes do not affect us; for they, generally speaking, extend not their Regards beyond their own Species. And this to a thinking Person may suggest a new Pleasure from the performance of the Duty we are recommending. To feel for all the Creatures is of all the Creatures upon Earth the property only of Man. One would imagine therefore that he should value himself upon the Distinction, and take a Pleasure in the Exercise of his Prerogative. To
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feel for all the Creatures too is an Attribute of God; one would imagine therefore that Man should exult in such a Fellowship, and be glad at every Opportunity of shewing himself admitted to it. Viewing himself in either of these Respects a Man cannot but find his Nature greatly ennobled, and if he shall be able to derive to himself no Pleasure from acting up to such Dignity he must either be miserably Base, or egregiously Stupid. It will be objected perhaps that the Pleasure we are now speaking of is founded in Pride. Why, call it Pride if you please. But it is a just Pride; it is a virtuous Pride; it is a Pride greatly to be gloried in. That which makes what we commonly call a Proud Man faulty, is, he is not Proud enough. He is one, who, over-valuing himself on the low Advantages of Birth or Fortune or the like, despises and behaves tyrannically to others; he is one who contents himself with imitating Men of a little higher Station than his own; whereas in reality he ought to raise his Ambition infinitely higher; the Being whom he should indeed imitate is no less than God Himself. Such a Pride as this would never induce him to over-rate his own Advantages, nor to think contemptuously of others. Though he should look upon himself, as, what in truth he is, the Viceroy of the Highest over all other earthly Creatures, yet he would tyrannize over, or causelessly afflict none of them. On the contrary, he would derive to himself a Pleasure from making the very meanest of them happy, that most exalted Pleasure of acting as a Second to God.

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Are we not warmed, my Brethren, by this ennobling View of our Nature to extend our Compassion and Beneficence to the Creatures below us? Let however the Baseness and Odiousness of treating them with Cruelty deter us from That. For when we are Cruel to them, when we causelessly destroy or unnecessarily torment them, whom is it that we resemble? I need not tell you. Every one's own thought must immediately suggest to him that evil Being which takes a Pleasure in the misery of Man; that great Apostate from Goodness, who, being by Nature more powerful than us, employs his Superiority in perverting and destroying us. Indeed a Lord of the Creation tyrannizing over the inferior Animals bears so near a resemblance to this grand Enemy that it seems a thing to be wondered at how People of that Stamp dare pretend to doubt, as, among other irreligious People, some of them at times may be heard to do, whether there is such a Being or not. God, it is wont to be alledged by these Sceptics, is good, and therefore would not probably admit a Being so powerfully pernicious into his Creation. But God hath admitted Them, Cruel as they oftentimes prove to their own Species, as well as to inferior Animals; why then should they doubt of the possible Existence of Spirits of a yet higher Order who may take pleasure, and be greatly instrumental, in the Miseries of their inferiors. The same Reason which they urge for the Exclusion of these out of Being is, at least, as powerful for the Exclusion of Themselves; and they have full as little room, upon that account, to doubt of the Existence of a Devil as of their own.

own. Indeed, to do them justice in this case, they themselves are only Devils of inferiour Abilities. They exercise Cruelty over those whom God hath put into their Power, and Satan himself does no more.

I have now held up to those who can delight themselves with tormenting the inferiour Creatures their true Picture. Ought they not to be shocked at it? Must they not flatly give up all pretensions to Reason, if they can retain in their Bosoms so strong a likeness to the most execrable of Beings without Horror?—To sum up this Argument in a few Words:—If we are Compassionate, and Beneficent to the Creatures below us we immitate the good Being; if we are Cruel and Unmerciful to them we resemble the evil One; and therefore, if we are wise, the Former of these kinds of Behaviour will be our Choice, the Latter our Aversion: for as from reflecting that we are like God we cannot but be highly pleased and satisfied with ourselves; so from perceiving in our Characters the opposite likeness we become just Objects of Self-abhorrence and Detestation.

Nor is the unmerciful Man here spoken of liable to suffer thus, and in his own Esteem only, but in the Esteem too, and that in many respects, of every sensible Person who knows him; barbarity to Brute Creatures being a thing not only Criminal in itself, but strongly implying the Indulger in it, if not actually guilty, yet dangerously ready for the Commission of many other Crimes.

For in the first Place it implies that he hath divested himself of that tender Affection of the Human Breast which

is Nature's chief guard in many Cases against the greatest Enormities, I mean Pity; Pity, which so often befriends the Needy, the Fatherless, and the Widow, when the Laws are too weak or too expensive for their Protection; Pity, which so often guards the tenderness of Infancy, and the feebleness of old Age from the penuriousness of Friends, and the fury of Enemies; Pity, which frequently gives a check to libidinous Desire, stops the Mouth of Insult, and seals up the Lips of the Slanderer. Of this tender Affection of the Soul, I say, a cruel Behaviour to Brute Creatures implies a Man divested; for concerning them it may be observed not only that they are formed very capable of acting upon it, but likewise that they cannot easily administer such strong Provocations to hard heartedness as those of our own Species; and hence a wide Door for suspicion is opened that if he is not so already, yet that upon Occasion he is prepared for becoming, in many other respects, a very wicked Man.

Moreover the cruel Tormenter of Brutes affords a strong Intimation that if he flies not out into many other criminal Excesses, he is restrained not so much by Conscience as by some meaner Consideration. He does not murder or maim his Neighbour. No: If he did the Laws of Man would lay hold on him. But there is no Human Law against maiming or torturing away the Life of his Beast; that therefore he does without any appearance of Remorse. The Laws of God, however, and the Dictates of Nature, reclaim very loudly from both these Sins; and though they differ,

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indeed, in point of Heinousness, yet they very strongly resemble, and have a ~~very~~ close affinity with each other.

Now, after a Man hath given proof that he dares make such bold Approaches to the most horrid in the Catalogue of Vices, may we not, without breach of Charity, conclude that he is prepared for the Commission of any of the meaner Enormities? Nay is there not Reason to apprehend that, might it be done with Impunity, he would venture even upon the murder of one of his own Species. There have been Tyrants who, after their Advancement to Sovereignty, have exercised the most atrocious Cruelty upon their Fellow-creatures, which, whilst in subjection to the Laws of their Country, they were seen to exercise only on ignobler Animals. Now that Impunity for Bloodshed which Supreme Power promises to Tyrants, secrecy in some Cases may promise to private People; and many are the Emergencies in Life which may be conceived powerful enough to move a Person who has no internal Restraint upon his Actions to listen to its Suggestions. Such a one as we have been now describing doth the merciless Tormenter of Brute Creatures by inference shew himself: The Tie both of Nature and of Conscience appears at least very loose upon him: Is he not therefore in many Respects the just Object of our Abhorrence? Shall we not, if we are wise, as much as possible, avoid him?

Here it may be alledged that the Cruelties we are speaking of are oftentimes committed by People unapprized that they are Criminal, and who consequently fall not under the latter part of this Censure.—Be it so—yet still even these people
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from the former Principle alone appear such as every prudent Person must think very dangerous Associates. And, in further Proof of the just Apprehension of Danger from such Connexions, it may be added, that the Laws of our Country have ordained that no Butcher shall be permitted to sit in a Jury on the Life of a Fellow-Subject; an easy Inference from which it is that if our Legislature hath affixed such an Imputation of proneness to shed Human Blood upon one who is compelled to slaughter Brute Creatures for a subsistence, we may reasonably deem Him still more dangerously prone to that Crime, who hath habituated himself to torture them in his Fits of Anger or Peevishness, or perhaps coolly for his Diversion.

From what was just now said, another very strong Reason presents itself to deter from Barbarity to the inferiour Animals. It endangers the Life of him that practises it. The great moral Painter of our time hath very forcibly expressed this Truth in a series of Prints entitled by him, The Progress of Cruelty; in which having represented a Youth advancing by degrees to the highest pitch of Cruelty, from the torturing of Insects, Birds, and Beasts, to the murder of a poor Girl who loves him, and who carries the Fruit of her Love for him in her Womb; he exhibits the dead Body of the inhuman Wretch undergoing the last infliction of the Law amidst a Circle of Surgeons, who cut and mangle it with as little appearance of Pity as He when alive was wont to shew to all the different kinds of Creatures which were so unhappy as to fall into his Hands.—A most merciless and
C 2 shocking

shocking End it must be confessed, but altogether worthy so shockingly merciless a Life !

Now to endear to you directly from these Considerations the practice of Beneficence to Brute Creatures it needs only be observed that, if Cruelty to them throws on a Man's general Character such odious Insinuations, the opposite Behaviour by the rule of Contraries, must have a tendency to create in People a favourable Opinion of it ; It must have a very strong tendency towards rendering him esteemed and caressed, as the Friend and Benefactor of Mankind. Nor, indeed, is it well possible that such a one should not be truly worthy of that God-like Character. For how can his Bosom avoid glowing with Benevolence for the Human Species who was never observed cold to the Welfare of ignobler Animals ? How can the Hand of that Man remain shut to the Necessities or Comforts of Creatures like himself which hath been habitually open to the Relief of Those of far different Natures ? Both History and modern Life afford many Instances to confirm our Reasoning upon this Point ; for they both afford many Instances of People, who having shewn themselves attentive to the Happiness of the Brute Creation, have very remarkably distinguished themselves as Friends and Benefactors to Mankind ; and, by the way, not one Instance, at least not one that I can recollect, of a Person who, having signalized himself by the Former of those kinds of Charity, was not very eminently amiable for the Latter also. But I shall not detain you by Quotations from History to this purpose ; and as for modern Life let it suffice to remind you of that late
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truly Great as Beneficent Personage, who was for many Years the Ornament and Happiness of This Neighbourhood, of whose exquisite Charity to those of the Human Kind, as you have many surviving Witnesses, so may you every Day behold Instances of his most amiable Tenderness for the inferiour Creatures. *

It is impossible for me now to offer any Thing more powerful than hath been urged already to incline you to Clemency to the lower kinds of Animals. There is, however, one Consideration more to recommend it from, which, as it hath an especial reference to that particular sort of Cruelty which was my principal motive to the making Choice of this Subject, demands yet to be insisted on; and that is the Honour of our Country.

English Men are very fond of being thought superiour to those of other Nations in that most amiable Quality which is distinguished among them by the Name of Good-nature; a Name which, together with other Things, they are wont to urge in proof of the justness of their Pretension in this respect; no other Language, it seems, having a Word which places that Quality in a light so amiable. Our Neighbours however are so far from allowing us any superiority to them in this Article, that, on the contrary, they charge us with

* The Duke of *Montague*, whose favourite Country Residence was in a Parish adjoining to that in which this Sermon was preached; where are still to be seen Horses once serviceable to him, enjoying, through his indulgence, the Pastures of their old Master, with an Immunity from all Labor.

a more than ordinary Fierceness and Malignity of Temper, and to support this Charge allege the frequent Representations of Murder in our Theatres, the many Civil Wars that have raged amongst us, and some other Appearances of want of Tenderness for our own Species. Now whether these Imputations may have strength or not to justify their Accusation I shall not stay to enquire: But I believe they have not: Indeed, to cut this matter short, I believe that was the Behaviour of the superiour Ranks of People among us alone to be considered our Pretension to the Excellency above spoken of would appear not ill-founded; and whoever shall call to mind the many public Hospitals in being amongst us, particularly the Foundling Hospital, the Magdalen Hospital, the many County Hospitals, and the noble Charities of various other kinds, supported like those by Contributions from multitudes of the wealthier People, in all the different parts of our Kingdom, will probably acknowledge that this is not said without Reason. But surely Barbarity to Brute Creatures, which Foreigners moreover object to us, cannot well be thought consistent with that amiable Character after which we aspire, and with this it must be confessed that the lower Orders of our Countrymen, in Men of which Orders it hath been thought that the Genius of a Nation is best seen, are to an extraordinary degree chargeable; a great part of their public Diversions consisting in setting Animals upon worrying and goring, and rending each other, or in torturing them to Death with their own Hands, and there being hardly any one kind of Beasts, Birds, or the larger sorts of Insects pretty
common

common amongst us, which is not wont to be tormented by them in the way of Entertainment. * Yes, my Brethren,
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• The great frequency of these kinds of Cruelty amongst us is probably owing to an Opinion in the Multitude that they are not Criminal; and this Opinion seems to proceed from a neglect in our Clergy of frequently enough representing, and insisting on them, as such. The generality of Mankind give themselves little or no trouble in reflecting on the real Goodness and Depravity of their Actions, but take for granted whatever their professed Guides in religious Matters have been wont to inculcate to that purpose. In the *Greek Church* there are some People who think it Damnable to join the Fore-finger to the Thumb in the Act of Crossing themselves, and others who hold it no less a Bar to eternal Happiness to make the like Application of the Ring-finger in the performance of that Ceremony; for thus both these different sorts of Religionists have been taught to believe by their respective Instructors; and hence in *Russia*, under the Reign of *Peter the Great*, who, among his other Great Designs, had, it seems, an Ambition to introduce an Uniformity throughout his Dominions in the Exercise of this Manual Act of Devotion, many of his Subjects, I have been told, chose rather to lose their Lives by the severest Tortures, than associate their Fore-fingers with their Thumbs in pointing at their Faces and Bosoms, as the mighty Monarch directed them. Now if such Whimsies as these can upon the Authority of Religious Teachers be generally entertained for Things odious or well-pleasing to the Divine Being, surely a Doctrine which has its Foundation in Nature as well as in the Gospel, could not fail of being universally adopted by us, if the Persons set apart for the preaching of the Gospel were at frequent Pains to assert and enforce it. And, agreeably to what hath been said, it may be observed that seldom, very seldom, it happens that one hears Discourses from the Pulpit on the Duty implied in our Text. Our Divines seem almost with one consent to have given up that Subject to those who are distinguished by the Title of Polite Writers, many of whom, it must be confessed, have laboured on it in a manner which does them great Honour, and indeed not without some Success. But the Compositions of these Gentlemen cannot be supposed known to those kinds of People who
stand

with this Species of Barbarity the lower orders of People among us are eminently reproachable, and while they continue

stand most in need of Information on this Article ; nor indeed do they, generally speaking, fall under the perusal of the better sorts of Readers till they are past that Age on which Religious Instruction is wont to make the most effectual Impressions ; and, besides, they must all want that Authority which, in the sense of young Minds at least, the Pulpit never fails of conferring upon its Doctrines:

With a View therefore to the remedying of this Defect I have often wished that some Person, whom Providence hath blessed with Riches, and with a Heart to make a charitable use of them, would found an *Annual Lecture* on the Duty and Usefulness of Clemency to Brute Creatures, and endow it with a handsome Salary, to which the Preacher should be entitled upon his publishing a certain number of Copies of his Sermon within a limited time, and not otherwise. I have proposed the annexing of a handsome Salary to this Lecture, in order to render the preaching it always desirable by a Divine of some Eminence, and, that such an one may be the more readily procured, I could wish it established in some very considerable Market-town, or City. The most proper Time for the delivering it seems to be the Morning of the *Shrove-Tuesday*. One good Effect would almost unavoidably accrue from such an Institution, the Suppression of Throwing at Cocks in the Town or City, where it should be established: For even this Sermon, preached several Years since, continues to have its desired Influence on a pretty populous, and no very governable, Parish. Nor is it to be feared, that from repeated Publications of Discourses upon this Subject, it would not find a way into many other Pulpits ; nay it is not to be despaired that it would in time among our Sacred Orators become a fashionable one. The Subjects constantly treated of in *Boyle's Lectures* have, it is not to be doubted, in consequence of these Lectures, been the oftener treated of in a thousand Churches. Besides, there is Reason to believe, as well from some few Experiments made to that purpose, as from the nature of the thing itself, that the generality of Christians would attend with Pleasure to Discourses on the most Christian Virtue in its greatest Latitude ; which, together with the great Benefits that may accrue to Mankind

tinue so it will remain an insuperable Obstacle to our obtaining that high Character among the Nations for Humanity, of which we are ambitious; a Character which could we attain to it, as it would render the Name of *Englishman* the most amiable on the Globe, what an Enemy must He be to his Country who contributes by his Behaviour to the fixing of that Obstacle? Could we once remove it, little or nothing could then appear wanting for the rendering us worthy of that glorious Character. Do you therefore to whom Providence hath assigned the lower stations in Life amongst us learn to attender your Hearts toward the Creatures inferior to you by Nature, as the Hearts of your Superiors in point of Fortune are seen already attendered toward you, and bid fair for ennobling yourselves by the Participation of

kind from the Practice of it, can, when the matter comes well to be considered, hardly fail, one might think, of bringing the Recommendation of it from the Pulpit into fashionable use. Now should this happen to prove the Case what a Pleasure must it be to the Founder of such a Charity to reflect that he was the Person chosen out by that Being, who delights in working Good out of Evil, for his principal Instrument in rendering a Custom for many Ages tormenting and destructive to one Species of the inferior Animals, the means of contributing to the well-being of all the various kinds of them! What an Excess of Pleasure must it afford him to reflect that thereby too he hath been made the Instrument of much Happiness to the Human Species, with the Thought of which likewise, from what was said above, it appears, he might with great Reason felicitate himself!

I shall make no other Apology for the Liberty taken in this Note, and for the extraordinary Length of it, than to say, that the present Age is an Age of Charity, and that if it was in my power to found the Lecture therein recommended, the whole Note should have been omitted.

a Title the most desirable with which Men can be graced;
 a Title which will do you Honour not in a few neighbouring Kingdoms only, but throughout the whole commercial World.

It would be tedious, and perhaps beneath the Dignity of this Place to speak distinctly against all the various kinds of Cruelty above hinted at, and, besides, some of them we have in common with the People of other Countries, that therefore I have not attempted; but there is one kind of them so extraordinarily shocking, and so peculiarly *English*, that it is in a very high Degree shameful to us, and cries aloud for particular Reprehension. It is our Cruelty to Cocks upon *Shrove-Tuesdays*. Give me now leave, my Countrymen, to enlarge upon the manifold Odiousness of this bloody Custom, and to endeavour to fill you with Abhorrence of it.

No other Nation under Heaven, I believe, practises it but our own; and whence it had its Rise among us I could never yet learn to my Satisfaction: But the common Account of it is, that the Crowing of a Cock prevented our *Saxon* Ancestors from massacring their Conquerors, another part of our Ancestors, the *Danes*, on the Morning of a *Shrove-Tuesday*, whilst asleep in their Beds. Now, if this Account of the Rise of it be true, very little Reason have we to perpetuate the Custom; for many of us, in all probability, owe our Beings to the Prevention of that Massacre; and for others it can only serve to shew that they are the Cruel and Cowardly Offspring of as Cruel and Cowardly

an Ancestry : Cowardly Offspring I say, for Cruelty is generally understood to imply Cowardice ; and how very great the Cruelty we are now speaking of is, You who have seen the heavy Blows given to one of those poor Animals at the Stake of Torture, and heard his piercing Screams ; who have seen his violent, but vain, Struggles to get loose ; seen his Toes battered ; his Wings flagged, perhaps broken ; his Beak dropping Gore ; and his Body by slow degrees sinking through bitter Anguish to the Ground ; ye, I say, who have been present at such a Spectacle, and most of you I believe have, how very great the Cruelty we are speaking of is need not now to be informed. Surely Treatment like this of a weak defenceless Animal, an Animal, however, brave by Nature, and courageous even to Death against his Equal, favours much of that base Quality which tempted our *Saxon* Fore-fathers to steal silently to the Chambers of their victorious Enemies, and murder them sleeping in their Beds.

Nor is Cowardice the only ill Quality with which our National Abuse of this Creature insinuates us chargeable. Was it a Bird of Rapine ; had we been hurt, or feared we the being hurt by it ; even to such a one, such Cruelty would deservedly expose us to that Censure : But to exercise it on one of our own Domestics, a poor Creature that from the Violence of others flies still for Protection to our Roofs, a Creature too which God hath formed more universally useful to Man than any other of the whole feathered Race,—and such is the Creature upon whom we exercise it—argues us moreover Inhospitable, Ungrateful, and, if not stupidly Inconsiderate, audaciously Impious.

If therefore, my Brethren, you have any regard for the Character of your Nation, be particularly zealous in endeavouring to put an end to this more than barbarous Custom. Neither practise it yourselves, nor permit any under your Influence to practise it. Forbid it, ye Parents: Forbid it, ye Masters, ye Officers of the Public suppress it. Is not the Love of your Country strong enough to impel you to this? Then let me press you to it from more selfish Considerations.

Consider that this bloody Custom is detested and abhorred by most of the better sorts of People among ourselves, and looked upon as the Entertainment of the Base and Ignorant only; and why should any Man choose to be reckoned among the Dregs of his Country?

Consider the shocking Abuse of Time in such Entertainments, an Abuse by so much the more shocking as it is shewn in Tormenting that very Creature which seems by Nature intended for our Remembrancer to improve it; the Creature whose Voice, like a Trumpet, summoneth Man forth to his Labor in the Morning, and admonisheth him of the Flight of his most precious Hours throughout the Day.

Consider that Mischiefs frequently happen to the Spectators of this tumultuous Diversion, from the Mis-direction or Rebound of the Instrument of Cruelty which the World, and the Sufferers own Consciences, are wont to upbraid them with as so many just Judgments from the Hand of Providence. Particularly let Parents consider this who are at Expence to enable their Children to act as Principals on these

these Occasions, and let them reflect upon that bitter Anguish which they must undergo should a Child lose an Eye or a Limb by their Criminal Indulgence.

Let such Parents moreover consider that they encourage in their Children a Habit of Gaming, which may end in Poverty; and at the same time a Habit of Cruelty, which, as we have shewn before, may end in Murder; And let them yet further consider that Oaths, Curses, and Blasphemies, make up a great part of the Language in these Scenes of Cruelty, and consequently that, by interesting their little Ones in such Scenes, they make a dangerous Advance towards hardening them in Impiety.

Let those Officers to whom the Peace of the Public is entrusted consider that, if they employ not their Authority in dispersing such disorderly Meetings, they do not their Duty; that from the Streets of our Metropolis, by the Vigilance and Activity of its Magistrates, this detestable Abuse of Cocks is already banished; and that therefore it is not a Thing too mean for them to Attempt, nor too difficult to be Effected in the Country.

As Christians let me desire you All to consider the Idea which *Christ* himself has given us of Nature's great Tenderness in regard to this Animal; "O *Jerusalem, Jerusalem*, says He, "how often would I have gathered thy Children together, even as a Hen gathereth her Chickens under her Wings!" As Christians, I say, consider this Idea, suggested by our Divine Master, of the great Tenderness of Nature towards this Animal, and then judge whether the

Annual

Annual Treatment of it in which we indulge ourselves must not be highly Sinful. Nature at its entrance into Life, works so affectionately towards it, that the blessed *Jesús* could not find in the whole Creation a more tender Image by which to express his own Benevolence for the *Jews*; and we, after it is grown to Perfection, derive a national Pleasure from destroying it with long and bitter Torments.

As Christians moreover consider how very ill the Pastime we are dissuading from agrees with the Season, and of how much more suitable an use the Victims of that Pastime might be made to us. On the Day following its tumultuous and bloody Anniversary our Church enters upon a long course of Humiliation and Fasting; and surely an Eye of Riot and Carnage is a most unfit Preparation for such a Course. Surely it would be infinitely more becoming us to make the same use of the Cock at this Season which Saint *Peter* once made of it. Having denied his Master, when it Crew he wept. We too by our wicked Lives have All of us denied the same, our Master, *Jesús Christ* the Righteous; were the Scriptures therefore so much in our Minds as they ought to be, the Bird which roused Saint *Peter* to Repentance would upon this Occasion be considered as an Alarm to ourselves. The Apostle's Tears, and Re-acceptance in consequence of them, would, upon its Crowing, rush instantly into our Remembrance, and quicken in us those Pangs of Holy Sorrow without which we profess to hope not the Forgiveness of our Sins. How very absurd is it to

to add still to the Number of our Sins, by abusing and torturing this friendly Monitor!

Lastly, let me desire you to recollect what was said in the preceding Parts of this Discourse concerning Compassion and Beneficence toward Animals in general, and to apply it to this particular Occasion; And above all Things let me desire you to remember that to exercise the Tenderness there spoken of is your Duty both as you are Men, and as you are Christians; and consequently that by offending against it you forfeit the Favour of that Being who can make you Happy or Miserable to all Eternity.

May the Almighty, and most gracious God, in whose Hand are the Hearts of Men, and whose tender Mercy is over all his Works; He who appointed the Rainbow as a Token of his Compassion to every living Creature upon the Earth: He who in his Forbearance of *Niniveh* expressed a tender Concern even for the Cattle; may He give a Blessing to what hath been now urged in Favour of his poor Creatures, to the Benefit of your Souls, and to the Praise of his most Holy Name, to which be ascribed all Glory and Honour Now and for Ever.

F I N I S.

